

Cultivators of Unity

Proverbs 6:16-19*

“The LORD hates . . . one who sows discord among brethren” (6:16,19).

The wise sayings and word pictures of Solomon show us that God values peaceful relationships. He hates those who spread strife among brothers. He warns those who start a fight by gossip, anger, or meanness. He warns about the inflammatory results of meddling in other people’s business, mocking their accomplishments, publishing their failures, or proudly announcing one’s own achievements.

Throughout Proverbs, God helps us to take another look at what we are fighting about and why:

To please God, we must know what He values. What does He care about? What does He love? What does He hate?

God’s values in the negative form (16-19)

- #1. God hates haughty eyes (17a)
- #2. God hates a lying tongue (17b)
- #3. God hates hands that shed innocent blood (17c)
- #4. God hates a heart that devises wicked plans (18a)
- #5. God hates feet that run rapidly to evil (18b)
- #6. God hates a false witness who utters lies (19a)
- #7. God hates one who sows discord among brethren (19b)

God’s values in the positive form (select vv.)

Begin with the heart

Proverbs shows us that peaceful relationships begin in the heart. A heart that is full of fearful anger will lash out defensively when threatened. A person who feels deprived of love is apt to react with envy and jealousy in the presence of others. Someone who is proud will disregard the interests and feelings of others. Someone who is bored may start a fight, while someone who craves attention and approval might pass along news of someone else’s failure.

There is an honest longing for love and affirmation in the heart of everyone. God placed that desire for acceptance and accomplishment there. But God also made us so that we could find fulfillment and peace of mind only by filling ourselves with the goodness and kindness of God.

It is therefore not enough to know that we should not argue and complain and fight our way through life. It’s more important that we let such proverbial knowledge drive us to the unseen motives and beliefs that lie beneath all disputes. We must allow the issues that are dividing us to help us to think through our own motives and what we really believe about God.

Do we believe that God can meet our deepest needs? Do we believe that He cares about us and our circumstances? Can we trust Him for the provisions of life? Or do we need to turn against one another to get what we want out of life?

—Herb Vander Lugt, *Knowing God Through Proverbs*, Discovery Series, RBC

*These notes are prayerfully prepared to aid, not replace, your personal study of God’s word.